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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LILONGWE 000635

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TAGS: [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [MI](#)  
SUBJECT: MALAWI CONSIDERS OFFER TO DEPLOY TO CHAD, STILL  
EXAMINING EXPANDED MONUC ROLE

REF: LILONGWE 630

Classified By: POLITICAL OFFICER JOHN LETVIN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Despite not making the cut for the UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), the Malawi Defense Force (MDF) continues to evaluate options and its capabilities to participate in other peacekeeping operations. The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) recently inquired about Malawi's interest in deploying to Chad in support of the next phase of the UN Mission to the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). According to the MDF, Malawi would take over for European Union (EU) forces currently in Chad and would be able to use the EU's existing bases. Director of Military Operations, Brig. Gen. Mercedes Chinjala said he was also aware of the potential need for additional troops in the UN Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and he had requested government funds to purchase 12 additional armored personnel carriers (APC) to support a larger deployment there. Chinjala said without government or donor equipment support for MONUC, the MDF will likely pursue the deployment to Chad because they believe the EU will leave behind or contribute most of the necessary equipment. Comment: President Mutharika specifically requested equipment and training support for peacekeeping missions in a recent meeting with Ambassador Bodde (reftel). The MDF echoed the desire for mission-specific ACOTA training before deployment and the talk of a potential deployment to a UN mission in Chad could result in an earlier than expected request for training. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) In mid-July, the United Nations informed the MDF that it would not need the infantry battalion that Malawi offered for UNAMID at the current time. The news came just days before two MDF generals were to depart to New York to negotiate a memorandum of understanding regarding the deployment. After a period of internal reevaluation and some bitterness, the MDF has slowly re-engaged with partners like the United States on peacekeeping issues. The MDF tentatively scheduled ACOTA training for an infantry battalion for early November, but MDF budget problems forced a delay of the training until 2009.

UNDPKO INQUIRES ABOUT CHAD  
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¶3. (C) In late October, multiple MDF sources told emboff that UNDPKO had contacted the MDF regarding a possible deployment to Chad. In October 30 meeting, Director of Military Operations, Brig. Gen. Mercedes Chinjala confirmed the communication from UNDPKO to emboff. Chinjala said that the MDF was asked to take over for European Union forces currently in Chad. He said that UNDPKO told the MDF they would be able to use the vacated bases left behind by the EU forces to enable a quick deployment. He also said the MDF would need to deploy by March 1, when the EU's one-year commitment would end.

MORE EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR EXPANDED ROLE IN CONGO

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14. (C) Emboff inquired about the potential of the MDF expanding its role in MONUC. Chinjala replied that the MDF's guard company in MONUC had been moved to Goma and he was well aware of the need for additional resources in the area. However, Chinjala said the situation remained dangerous in East Congo and he would not recommend deployment of a battalion unless the MDF could obtain additional APCs to support the mission. He said he has requested funds from the government to purchase 12 new Caspir APCs from South Africa to add to MDF's current fleet of 15, but was not optimistic. Chinjala said the government remained focused on next May's elections and was unlikely to approve additional military expenditures. (Comment: The government is already seeking \$40 million USD from donors to make up the shortfall in its fertilizer subsidy program, so additional funding for the military seems unlikely.)

MDF WILL SERIOUSLY CONSIDER CHAD DEPLOYMENT

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15. (C) Chinjala said if the MDF does not receive government or donor support for equipment shortfalls, the MDF will likely pursue the offer to deploy to Chad. The MDF believes that the EU will leave behind or contribute most of the necessary equipment for a successful deployment there. With its equipment needs filled, Chinjala reassured emboff that Malawi would deploy a full battalion. He reiterated that the will to expand their role in peacekeeping was still there.

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FIRM DEPLOYMENT WILL SPUR QUICK ACTION ON ACOTA

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16. (C) Comment: During President Mutharika's recent meeting with Ambassador Bodde (reftel), Mutharika requested equipment and training support for peacekeeping operations. The President also reiterated that the GOM still wished to expand its role in UN peacekeeping operations. The MDF echoed these comments, stressing to emboff that it still desires ACOTA training before a deployment. While budgetary constraints and the possible intake of new recruits previously seemed to be show-stoppers for training until mid-2009, the MDF's Deputy Director of Training said he would exhaust all possibilities to accommodate ACOTA training if the MDF has a firm deployment date for a mission. The MDF remains likely to request a full six- or eight-week training program on short notice, and may need it earlier than the previously expected mid-2009 timeframe. Post continues to engage the MDF to gain as much lead-time as possible and has asked for pro-forma fuel and ammunition invoices as well as ration costs now in anticipation of a short-notice request for training.

BODDE